

Business Wire's Complete Guide to Modern Public Relations



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SECTION I

*What is company communication
and what will it look like in the future?*

FOR OVER 100 YEARS THE CORE ELEMENTS OF A NEWS RELEASE REMAIN THE SAME

On October 28, 1906, tragedy occurred – an eastbound train speeding through Atlantic City derailed over a drawbridge causing 53 passengers to drown in the creek below. Popular corporate practice at the time called for Pennsylvania Railroad, owners of the ill-fated train, to cover up the incident. This is exactly what might have happened had it not been for [Ivy Lee](#), an early public relations practitioner hired by the company to build a better public image. He saw the event as an opportunity to establish a better relationship with journalists; a relationship based on trust and communication.

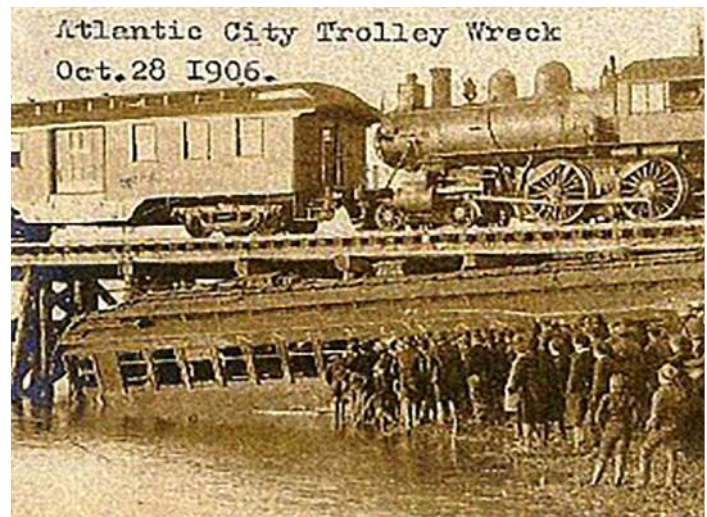
Under his advisement, Pennsylvania Railroad invited members of the press to the scene of the accident and released a statement detailing the known facts. The New York Times was so impressed by the candor of the issued statement that they chose to print it, word-for-word. The

[modern day press release](#): issued statements aimed at disclosing company news to interested parties, was born.

What made the news release so popular?

Journalists welcomed the new cooperation from companies and organizations in bringing facts to the public. It has been almost 110 years since Pennsylvania Railroad reached out to the media and still company communication is a welcome presence for journalists. In a recent [media survey](#), 90 percent of the over 300 industry professionals participating used a company-issued news release in the previous week.

While the name Ivy Lee is known to few PR pros, his legacy continues to influence best communication practices even in the digital age. Lee understood that a news release was only as valuable to the issuing company as it was to the recipients, journalists and other newsmakers.



Nothing states this notion more than one of the guidelines listed in his Declaration of Principles, an announcement that established the modern role of public relations.

"This is not an advertising agency. If you think any of our matter ought properly to go to your business office, do not use it." – Ivy Lee, Declaration of Principles.

The news release was a product of necessity and continues to serve as a valuable tool for both communications pros as well as media professionals. The best method to maximize the outcome of company communications is to follow the guidelines that have dictated public relations for over a century.

How can Lee's guidelines aid in composing a news release for the digital era?

Be Trusted and Timely

Ivy Lee understood that [trust](#) is the cornerstone of successfully managing company communications and building a bigger, better brand. With online conversations occurring 24/7 it is important to act swiftly when responding to a crisis or even a potential crisis in order to best manage public sentiment and maintain a high reputation.

Focus on the Facts

News content is reliant on facts and there is no quicker way to receive coverage than providing the very facts journalists and media professionals need to craft their coverage pieces.

Be Interesting

In the digital and mobile age, the [headline](#) is the only knock on the door that can garner articles and other coverage for a news release. Don't be coy and make sure to present enough information to let the reader know what lies inside is legitimate newsworthy content.

Be Impactful with Multimedia

Multimedia is king with around [8 billion](#) images being uploaded daily. News releases now come with images, videos, and even [gamified multimedia](#). Company communications must be packaged in ways that audiences demand.

WHILE THE NEWS RELEASE REMAINS TIMELESS, THE DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS IS CHANGING DRASTICALLY

Millennials have been riding the wave of digital revolution for close to a decade, leaving behind a wake of influence over every industry. Well, for news media, the crest just broke and as we all bob up and down in an ocean of technology, we need to brace for the oncoming information tidal wave known as the mobile generation. The Pew Research Center has released a series of data detailing the current [state of news media for 2015](#) and the numbers are as era defining as when the final issues of LIFE magazine saw their way to the printers. Of the top 50 digital news websites, 39 saw more traffic to their sites and associated applications come from a mobile source than from a desktop computer.

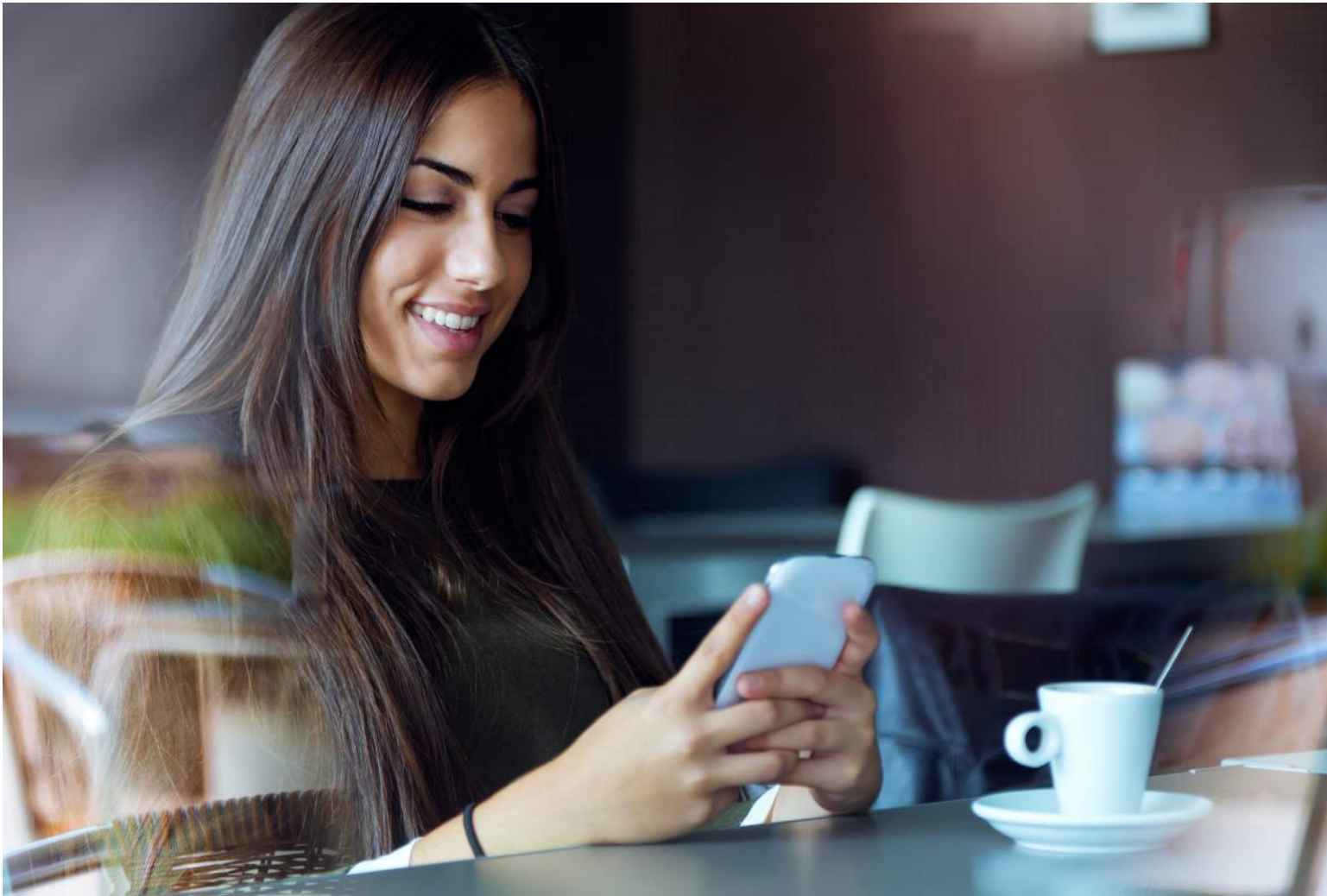
Trying to understand this trend is pointless. It doesn't matter if people are choosing to use mobile devices because of their convenience while on the go or out of actual preference. What does matter is the growing dominance of mobile technology and communication professionals must adapt, just as they did nearly a decade ago when Millennials first opened the doors on modern news consumption.

In January of 2015, Yahoo-ABC News saw 93,160 unique visitors to their sites and associated applications coming from mobile devices while only 59,099 visited from a desktop computer. Other news outlets that saw similar disparity include CNN Network, NBC News Digital, Huffington Post, USA Today sites, BuzzFeed, and The New York Times brand. For the communications industry, [this pattern](#) dictates that both editorial news, and company issued news, must be compatible with mobile platforms in order to reach the desired audience.

Besides shedding light on how people consume their news, the Pew analysis also revealed a startling trend. Although individuals more often consume their news using a mobile device, they spend less time doing so per visit. For 40 of the 50 top news sites, visitors using desktop computers spent the same if not more time per visit. For 25 of those sites, the time spent per visit from desktop users was at least 10 percent higher when compared to those using a mobile device.

It is clear to news outlets that it is becoming harder to keep an individual's attention on a single piece of news. This is a challenge communication professionals have been facing for years.

And the answer is the same for both types of content creation; in each case, article or news release, the addition



of multimedia is [statistically shown](#) to be more effective in keeping a viewer engaged and [scientifically shown](#) to convey a message in a much shorter amount of time than a text-only message, 60,000 times faster to be exact. Consider multimedia as a passport, allowing editorial coverage and news releases to travel safely and efficiently

into mobile territory.

Interactive multimedia, the [gamification of the news release](#), has shown an average engagement of 6:12 minutes. Compare that to the average engagement with text-only news releases of only 20 to 30 seconds.

The mobile generation wants their news when they

want it, and when they get it, they don't want it for long. That's not to say that the public has lost interest; on the contrary, news consumption is at an [all-time high](#). It's just a different type of news consumption, one that engages more senses, and communication pros need to take notice and make changes to the process today. Remember, you can fight that wave and lose, drowning in a constant evolution of technology serving up a constant stream of content, or you can ride it out and bask in the sunshine above.

Millennials (ages 18 – 34) comprise the largest demographic in the United States. So, it comes as no surprise that this generation also spends most of their days (18 hours each day!) consuming media and provides the loudest voices to be heard within social media platforms, according to recent research by social-influence marketing platform, Crowdtap. A whopping seventy-one percent of [Crowdtap survey participants](#) listed social media as a top priority in their lives, engaging in it daily.

What's more, 60 percent of these same Millennials depend on social media to keep up-to-date on current

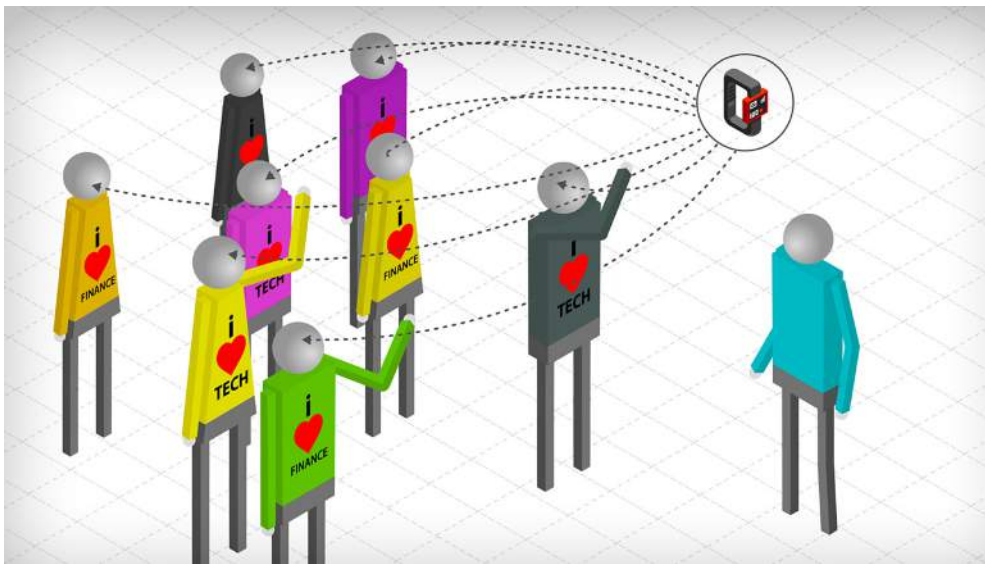
global and local news. But what publications do they read? This audience prefers to consume news and world affairs content created by those they perceive to be their peers – flocking to platforms such as BuzzFeed and Huffington Post instead of traditional news outlets such as The New York Times. The information gathered from user-generated content sites and sources is trusted 40 percent more than information gathered from other types of sources.

The remaining 33 percent of Millennials still cite more traditional media sources – print, radio and television – as a

way they consume media. However, studies show that user-generated content shape this generation's lives much more than any other form of media, and they remain the only generation where digital media exceeds traditional.

Millennials spend the majority of their weekly media time using digital

devices (especially smartphones), and 43 percent access the internet via their phones more than through their computer. Three out of four Millennials own a smart phone and use social media as a source for current affairs, apart from networking. They tend to rely heavily on HuffPost, Yahoo-ABC, CNN and BuzzFeed.



SECTION II

How to write a news release?

THE ELEMENTS OF A NEWS RELEASE

Journalists and media professionals get bombarded daily with emails and news releases. Those same journalists and media professionals also don't have a lot of time. Make sure that you're doing everything you can to grab their attention by giving them exactly what they're looking for. What are they looking for? The headline. Before a journalist reads your release, they first see the headline. The headline is like a trailer to a movie, one that is well made will garner the interest of the audience.

Conversely, when a headline is poorly written it is the last thing that gets read before a journalist moves on to another piece of content. The use of action words grabs a reader's attention. Words such as honk, fizzle, careen, blast, chew create an energy. They disclose to the reader that something is happening, something dramatic and drama is interesting. Have some fun with the English language (or whatever language you use) and highlight the action of your news in the headline.

Another reason to treat the headline with utmost importance is because Google crawls content from the top down, first to last, and that includes headlines. Always load your best content in the front of the release and get your company name into the headline when applicable. Be specific and clear as to what will be covered within the release. Don't be too general or vague. It's OK to tease the reader a bit, but try to be as straightforward as possible.

Before you send it, take another look. Take a moment to put yourself in the reader's shoes, the shoes of someone who doesn't know what the release is about. Does the headline you wrote make sense to someone who has no idea what the story is about? There is even an online [headline analyzer](#) by CoSchedule to help you craft the perfect headline that hooks the reader in and doesn't let go.

Who are you?

News is an industry of trust, so always ask yourself, why should journalists trust me? Treat a news release like a self-endorsement when trying to arrange a blind date. Before you write your news release, you have to answer one big question. Who are you? What are your best features and why would you (or your news release) be a perfect match for someone? It's good to have a trusted mutual friend, such as a newswire service, to make the introduction to your desired media outlet. Remember, you must woo a journalist with your release. A key tip is to include a well-written [boilerplate](#) at the bottom of your release. A boilerplate is a mini-bio of your company that lets the reader know exactly what you do.

BUSINESS WIRE NEWS CAPSULE

- 1 Your assets are organized into tabs
- 2 Select from simple, easy-to-navigate templates and customize your own header
- 3 Thumbnails of your assets
- 4 Your featured asset is front and center
- 5 Buttons and icons allow you to lead your audiences to external links
- 6 Easily share your News Capsule on social media
- 7 Embed your News Capsule

The core of a news release

Today's reporters are looking for two key elements. They want to know the facts, and they want to know the story behind the facts – the one that tells why the product was made, who it impacts, what that impact was and why it would impact the publication's core audience. This is when you turn to your 'W's!

Who, what, where, when, and why is an exercise taught in elementary schools so that students can get a grasp of how to break down a story to its most basic and relevant elements. Use this same exercise when drafting your release because journalists don't want to go looking for key story elements. By reducing the amount of work needed for a third party to tell your story you will find a much higher likelihood of coverage and engagement with your news.

To truly tap into the reader's interests, utilize knowledge of how search engines function and research Google Trends to locate relevant keywords based on specific criteria. Journalists and other media professionals use Google Trends so referencing the same source as your target audience will have beneficial results.

An age of multimedia

In Business Wire's 2015 annual Media Survey of more than 400 journalists and media professionals, more than a third (36.3 percent) are more likely to review a press release that includes multimedia than one that does not. The preferred media are photographs, by a staggering 82.8 percent of those participating in the survey.

But even multimedia is changing. With more than 63 percent of the world being visual and interactive learners, static multimedia is being replaced with interactive assets such as the [Business Wire News](#) and [Picture Capsules](#) that create engagement opportunities for newsreaders.

These capsules are so engaging that the average viewer is now spending between 4-10 minutes per Capsule consuming the related content they host.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MULTIMEDIA IN THE DIGITAL AGE

In today's digital world, a news release should absolutely integrate multimedia. Be it photo, video or infographic, the world is now hungry for visual communication.

Why? Study after study shows that articles containing images get more views than articles without visual assets. In fact, in 2012 Jeff Bullas noted that articles can receive up to 94 percent more views! Imagery helps to communicate your message. It conveys the essence of your news, giving viewers an opportunity to bond emotionally with your brand. Adding a photo to your news release will increase your visibility. And if the visual is good, you can even expect a greater impact for your brand. Why? If the image is so interesting that people click and share it on social media, it increases the audience and impact of your news. In fact, Business Wire's internal data shows news releases that include photos, videos and other multimedia elements get [three times the number of the views](#) as news releases without it. So what role will images play in your communication program in the future?

Over the years, our appreciation of photography has changed. New tools and platforms, including blogs, smartphones and social networks, have played a key role in this development. Photos are everywhere and are quickly becoming the new way for consumers to communicate. Instagram and Pinterest are amongst the top social media outlets, bringing imagery to a new level. Showing huge usage figures across the globe, Snapchat allows users to share their feelings with images, instead of straight text. Today's top communicators understand the power of high-quality and visually appealing photos to make their news even more attractive to reporters, analysts and consumer audiences.

Photos should be inspirational and appealing to readers, i.e., potential customers. Aren't you bored of seeing head shots of CEOs as depicted fifty years ago? Times have changed! Forget the dull background with your CEO standing straight in front of the camera. Frontal head shots are over. Today, your CEO can be outside, sitting in his/her office or standing in an industry unit, relaxed, surrounded by a colorful background, in semi-profile bringing true dynamism to the image. Picture format can be horizontal (wide format being very trendy). Choose unexpected perspectives and control the lighting to ensure the focus is in the right place. The photo should capture the person behind the portrait. The photo should trigger an emotional connection with the viewer, directly shaping their view of the CEO and the organization they lead.

The same applies for products and commercial imagery. Inanimate objects can be eye-catching too depending on the angle and the arrangement. Presenting a new product does not need to be formal and in a safe tone. Elevate your product by re-picturing it. Trends in 2015 are focusing on creating big, dynamic images on small screens. Use these images to showcase your organization's big vision. Remember that the look and feel of your images conveys meaning in

and around your brand messages.

We know today that 40 percent of people will respond better to visual information than plain text. Getting the right image can be the key to conveying your message in a few seconds. Engaging, effective and meaningful visual communications help consolidate your customers' perceptions of your business, while simultaneously helping to reinforce your brand's identity.

[Over half](#) of journalists and media professionals are more likely to review a press release that includes multimedia, and images/photographs are one of the [top content types](#) for the online newsroom, but in order to truly launch effective multimedia, we must remember one very important detail – the caption.

When looking for the first time at a news release, readers' attention immediately goes to the caption, and then the added image.

This creates the ideal opportunity for you.

With [up to twice as many people](#) reading captions than body copy, captions provide an excellent opportunity to attract the reader's attention. This short but sweet accompanying paragraph is your key to unlocking the image – it is the who, what, where, when, why and how, all rolled into one short sentence.

Immediately after reading the caption, the reader will flick back to the image, and view it, usually, from a different perspective. This is more commonly known as the loop, and is essential to engaging the reader. The photo and the caption complement each other, building suspense and satisfying curiosity.

But it is not only that captions define images, captions put images into context. In many instances, the caption and image can result in coverage when an article is not possible. Business Wire captions can be up to 100 words each, more than enough space to create a connection between image and story.

Given the importance of captions, and their role in not only increasing coverage but building connections between your product and your customer, what are the best practices for writing one? Multimedia is more important than ever within the news creation and sharing process. The caption serves as a reference, increases the impact of the image and adds to the credibility of the piece. Don't overlook it, instead take advantage of this space and use it to not only increase coverage of your news, but conversions as well.

DO

USE [PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES](#), INTERESTING ADJECTIVES AND ACTION VERBS

The caption should focus on action, and help the article to progress, while providing as much information as possible as to the relevancy of the multimedia to the news you are sharing.

USE PHRASES THAT HAVE BEEN CUT OUT OF THE MAIN NARRATIVE

This is the ideal time to retrieve phrases that were cut out for length reasons, but that are still pertinent to the text and work well with the release.

DON'T

REPEAT BODY COPY

For the simple reason that nobody likes déjà vu, whatever they're reading!

PROVIDE INFORMATION THAT'S AVAILABLE SIMPLY BY LOOKING AT THE PHOTO

A reader will look at the caption to learn more, not for reinforcement of already formed ideas. Captions allow you, the brand, to define the image and those captured in it, properly.

USE PHRASES "ABOVE" OR "PICTURED HERE"

These phrases are of little use to reporters who may choose to use your image and caption instead of the entire press release.

HOW TO WRITE AN EARNINGS RELEASE

Quarterly earnings releases are a reflection of the financial health of an organization and are most frequently read by the financial community, shareholders, customers and employees. Earnings releases, which must succinctly showcase this extremely important information, are often a cause of stress and anxiety, particularly in terms of readability. Today the average news consumer reads only [around 20 percent of provided text](#), leaving today's communicators asking how they can optimize the impact of their press releases.

Write your company name in the headline

Including your company name in your press release headline is the quickest and easiest way to associate your company with its earnings release, and yet it is overlooked time and time again. Furthermore, the inclusion of the company name often leads to a higher SEO ranking – ideal for your annual results!

Ensure the most important information is at the top of your release

Readers spend 80 percent of their time reading information found [above the fold](#), so this is where your most important information should be. An operating highlights summary in the form of a bulleted list, positioned just after the first sentence of the release, can greatly improve adoption and understanding of your news.

Include financial tables in your release

The importance of including complete financial tables within your press release cannot be stressed enough. Financial tables serve as a visual, simplifying wordy paragraphs and allowing quick and relatable comprehension of a company's situation. In addition, many analysts utilize models to predict company health. Financial tables provide all the detail needed to update these models. And of course, don't forget to include the reporting currency.

Quote a company executive

Ideally, the quote accompanying your earnings release will be provided by the [company's CEO](#). A comment, no matter how long or short, goes a long way toward the personalization of your company and presentation of your key message. This comment can provide a justification, explanation or act as a written pat on the back. Either way, a comment from an executive provides true context of the quarter's financials – particularly useful given that a large majority of readers of this release will be your shareholders.

Subtitle your sections

Earnings releases are notoriously difficult to read and comprehend, making subheadings the perfect solution. Included just below the press release headline, sub heads should indicate the type of information to follow, allowing the reader to easily navigate the different categories of information.

information first. This goes back to readers spending most of their time above the fold. Historical information, although useful, is not the most relevant in these types of releases. If it is essential – for example, year-on-year comparisons – this ideally should be included within the financial tables or near the end of the press release, below the fold.



Group together similar information

When possible, similar content should be written consecutively, or as close together in the release as possible. This keeps repetition to a limit, and again, allows the reader to navigate your release more easily.

Be succinct

There is an unavoidable need to include certain information, for regulatory reasons, but this doesn't mean that your whole release should follow a lengthy, wordy pattern. Be [as concise as you can](#) be, but take care to include all the necessary information.

Keep historical information towards the end of the release

Readers look for the most current and important

Enhance your earnings release with multimedia

The fastest way to increase effectiveness of news consumption is to include additional visual content. An infographic of your financials, such as the one created and distributed by Ace Hardware, is an easy way to represent your quarterly results. Or use video from your CEO or division head, like [ARC Resources' Myron's Minute](#), to explain, in plain language, the story behind the data.

Use numbered footnotes – and group them together!

There is nothing worse than having to match up symbols, and to guess where they are inside the release. A nice, neat, numbered footnote list, found at the very bottom of the release, makes everyone's life easier. In addition, consider hyperlinking to footnoted information to provide

easy access when needed.

The combination of these techniques will improve your earnings release's readability and ensure that the most important information is found and read by the majority of desired readers. In addition to increased comprehension of your financials by your core audience, you may just get more coverage as your target reporters and shareholders find it easier to digest the news.

How to write a compelling earnings release

With regard to the information that should be included in terms of structure and content, companies will inevitably vary in the type of information provided, but should try to keep to consistent and complete information in plain English. Here are a [few helpful guidelines](#):

Structure:

- › The date of release and city and state of headquarters should be at the beginning of the release
- › The most important news should be summarized in the first paragraph
- › Subheadings should be used to further clarify and highlight important corporate developments
- › The last paragraph should include a business description, with the company's complete name, ticker symbol and equity market
- › Media contact information and a website address should always appear at the end of the release

Content:

- › Changes in disclosure from quarter to quarter, or year to year, should be specified and explained (sales, revenues, net income, diluted earnings per share and percentage change for each section)
- › Observations should be made only between

comparable periods – for example, it is better to compare a third quarter of year N to the third quarter of year N-1, rather than year N's second quarter

- › Key value drivers and other important line items should be clearly noted
- › Charges/gains/losses should be included if they contribute to the results, and it is advisable to explain how and why they have had an effect (eg. extraordinary gains, losses, equity losses and accounting changes)
- › A consistent format should be used throughout the press release (this is particularly important when reconciling GAAP and non-GAAP financial measures)
- › It is prudent to mention key events and changes, such as government practices and changes to the Board of Directors, plus any steps being taken to address these changes
- › Information on gross profit and margin (plus percentage change), cash flow, share repurchase activity and other measures of performance (capital expenditures, R&D expense and nonfinancial measures) should be included where appropriate
- › Provide forward-looking insights when possible, for the next quarter and/or year, and how the previous forecast has measured up to the current results

Financial statements should always be labeled as audited or unaudited, and can include: complete income statement (with current and year-ago quarter numbers, current year-to-date and year-ago year-to-date comparable period numbers, outstanding shares – both fully diluted and basic), balance sheet (current quarter numbers and end of prior-year numbers), plus cash flow tables, current quarter numbers and year-to-date.



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SECTION III

How to build relationships with media outlets

BUILDING PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS IS AN ACTIVE AND ONGOING PROCESS

During a presentation at this year's [HUB Convene event](#), famous communications pro Peter Shankman discussed the importance of customer service on a company's sales and marketing funnel, and the lack of customer service received from most of the companies we interact with on a daily basis. After asking an audience member why they praised a recent flight, and learning that it was because they were safely transported from point A to point B, Peter broke down society's current standards for customer service: Getting what we pay for passes as the pinnacle of service today. For the consumer, this is terrible, but for organizations this presents a fantastic opportunity. If people's expectations of customer service are so low, it shouldn't take much to wow someone, making it very easy for smart organizations to create a positive and lasting impression.

Paying a friend a compliment or going out to lunch can strengthen ties and facilitate a year's worth of inside jokes. Building a professional relationship is no different. It is the small, almost effortless, actions that can be the difference between meeting people's expectations and completely redefining them. In today's world of low customer expectations, it doesn't take much to impress someone, so impress as often as possible.

Peter Shankman didn't just preach relationship building; he described how he puts his plan into action. For Peter, going above and beyond in relationship building starts with pizza. After signing on a new client, he likes to drop by their offices unannounced with a surprise pizza lunch. This allows Peter and his clients to communicate and learn more about each other's expectations and goals, ultimately resulting in better executed programming. What makes it special is that for Peter, it is not a required act, but rather done as a choice of goodwill.

Media relations doesn't have to be about throwing a pizza party but can be just as easy. One of the easiest ways to build awareness, and potentially coverage, of your company is to build relationships with key journalists and bloggers, before news is available to share, and after. If a journalist likes communicating with you, that can help you build a respectful, reciprocal relationship. With a personalized email or a tweet, you may end up surprising the very person you need to help amplify your message.

The digital age has made everything impersonal. We believe that we are building stronger, more personal ties with a person because we have access to their lives, their day-to-day activities and insight into their thought process. But in reality, access to information is not the same as building relationships.



KNOW YOUR LOCAL MEDIA

The first step to building relationships with local media is to actually get to know them. Familiarize yourself with publications you are interested in reaching to understand what they cover and the audience(s) they reach.

Use the 24-7 news cycle to your advantage!

Newsrooms are becoming more competitive with the 24-hour news cycle and continual demand for fresh content. Knowing what journalists are looking for and when will prove advantageous.

Press releases are still valuable as long as the release includes the right information.

As the [2015 Business Wire Media Survey Results](#) showed, many journalists admit to having used a press release within the past 24 hours. Press releases are an asset to journalists so long as they are accurate, straight-forward and informative.

Bonus: when scheduling a release, always have a company representative on hand for interviews.

“Digital is driving everything.” (Social media too!)

Many traditional print publications are moving toward a “digital first” philosophy. Digital metrics are a key component to measuring an online publication’s success. Editors analyze stories for number of visits and shares, and amount of time spent on the site, among other things. Additionally, many journalists now must market their own stories. If you secure media coverage, build rapport with the journalists by getting the word out! This is a win-win for the journalist and your client or organization.

Now is a great time to be in PR if you’re utilizing different media platforms!

Due to the digital demand and the continuous news cycle, journalists and media outlets are broadening their outlook on content, thus creating more opportunities for story ideas. Even if your news angle isn’t a fit for the homepage, it could be used elsewhere. Based on the interest it gets, a story can evolve into something bigger.



THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING REGIONAL CULTURES AND TRADITIONS

It is extremely important to understand regional cultures and traditions. One such Asian tradition is China's Lunar New Year, that falls on a single day, and the travel frenzy known as Chunyun, a 40-day period surrounding the Spring Festival. It is a migration unlike any other, with an estimated [2.8 billion passenger trips](#) undertaken between February 4 and March 15. Millions upon millions of people hurry home to reunite with family and enjoy the holiday. It is said to be the [largest annual migration in the world](#).

With so many people concentrating on getting from one place to another, it stands to reason that not a lot of business gets done in the People's Republic of China during this time of celebration. It also stands to reason that sending out a news release around the holiday is not a wise move – unless, of course, you'd rather people not see your news.



THIS CONVERSATION WITH SHAUN BOWERS, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF INTERFAX NEWS SERVICES IN CHINA, SERVES TO EDUCATE ON HOW A REGIONAL TRADITION CAN AFFECT THE IMPACT OF YOUR NEWS:

Q: Can you describe the impact Spring Festival travel has on not only the news distribution business, but all business in China?

A: It [business] almost stops. Family is at the very center of Chinese culture and this is the time of the year that workers all across China return to their home province to visit family. Often, it is the only time they will see their family during the entire year.

Starting in January, factories will stop taking orders because of the holiday and will be rushing to fill orders they have in hand. The distance workers have to travel means journeys can take days, so often workers will start traveling two weeks early ... and it's not uncommon for a factory to close for an entire month. So for most businesses, it is a quiet period ... unless you are a food vendor near a train station or a retail clothing store (it is [traditional to buy new clothes](#) for the Spring Festival).

Q: A question I have received in the past is: Don't the Chinese have the most cell phones (per capita) in the world? Wouldn't they still

be absorbing news on their devices during the holiday?

A: Perhaps you should ask them if they sit around the Thanksgiving dinner table and read the news. The Spring Festival is a time for celebration – the whole of China is on holiday and people are focused on fun and seeing old friends.

Q: To which western holiday would you compare the Lunar New Year? Or is there such a comparison?

A: It's hard to compare ... for Europe it would be Christmas, and for the U.S. I would say it's like Thanksgiving ... at Thanksgiving, people will do anything to get home. The U.S. has 330 million people and I'm sure readers can relate to what a nightmare travel can be during Thanksgiving. Now imagine adding another 900 million people, and you get a sense of what it's like.

Q: What have been your personal observations and experiences with the Lunar New Year? Any crazy travel stories?

A: My wife's family is from Hong Kong so we don't have to travel, but it's quite normal for us to sit down to dinner with 67 immediate family members ... some of whom have traveled from all corners of the world. There is a saying in Hong Kong: "Don't go on holiday as everyone you know will be on holiday, so stay in Hong Kong and enjoy the peace and quiet."

According to Shaun, it's not that people in China don't read news during the holiday; it's just not a top priority. Chinese New Year is the one time of year when all workers can return home and, in essence, MUST return home. It is important for them to do so and it is expected that they will return with gifts for the whole family. And in the end, what's more important: being present with family or reading up on news about listed companies? Shaun's advice is to hold off on sending any news to China during the holiday. The bigger takeaway is to conduct research on regional cultures and traditions to make sure that when your news is released, the largest audience will be available to see it.

SECTION IV

How to measure the success of your communication

HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY MEASURE YOUR PR PROGRAMS

While sales and marketing teams have been using data for years to influence outreach programming, public relations professionals find themselves with few tools that could truly measure the impact of their important work. This lack of measurement has in many ways led to a very big misconception that PR has only an indirect impact on the company's bottom line.

Expect this to change for two core reasons: 1) The value of PR is on the rise - editorial coverage is the most impactful type of content you can generate. The 2014 Nielsen/Impower study showed that editorial coverage [creates a 15 percent lift](#) in purchase intent, the highest of all marketing tools. 2) New technologies make this easy: Thanks to new technologies and easy-to-use measurement and monitoring platforms such as [NUVI](#), [Social Mention](#), Google and [Google Analytics](#), data can be easily gathered and analyzed in real time.

Here are eight ways to garner better ROI and better overall measurement of your PR program.

- 1. Get granular - the rise of the true target audience:** Gone are the days in which everyone can be a targeted customer. Communicators and marketers know that by pitching and activating highly granular audiences, you can achieve much higher overall success. So skip the generalized press releases and start writing for your true user. Activate these users to share your messaging to directly impact your sales funnel.
- 2. Properly count the overall results of each program:** Rather than simply focus on secured news coverage, success now includes everything from the first media placement to final desired action, including inbound traffic, new social followers, marketing channel subscriptions and amount of time on site – how many people came to your website and how long did they stay. If they leave quickly, the landing page needs to be fixed.
- 3. Skip the shares - look at the influence and reach:** Take a minute to look at WHO is sharing out your news. Look at each profile, to see who the person is and what their value is in relation to your end goal. Are they brand fans or industry experts? Or just a random tweeter who does not impact your goals at all? Use this opportunity to build relationships with influential sharers via a thank you tweet, RT or follow.
- 4. Advanced attribution is HUGE for PR:** Already a mainstay in many e-commerce companies is the concept of using advanced attribution vs. last touch to determine exactly what the customer's sales journey was for your brand. Tracking customers through their entire journey means that every touch point along the way is credited with their role in the sale. Did the customer only learn about you from a press release? Or have they already visited your site from an ad or a blog previous to signing up for your product? Understanding how many times prospects engage with your brand (and on which platforms) will help you design better sales and marketing programs, easily

supportable with PR.

5. **Mobile? Desktop:** Which devices does your audience use to research a product and which one do they use to buy? Some consumers use mobiles to research and desktop to purchase, yet many impulse buys are made via mobile. What type of product do you have? Is your product an impulse buy or does it have an elongated sales cycle? How is your PR programming impacting these readers?
6. **Not listening? You should be fired:** Listen to social conversations to become a better marketer, build a better product and become a better company. Plus you can customize messages and reach via platform tools. The more creative and customized the message, the more likely a person is to respond.
7. **Time spent with the brand:** If your company's goal is to be your industry's leader, then one of your measurement points must be to track the amount of time your audience spends with you. How many times did they visit your website? How long did they stay and how many pages did they read? How many conversations do they have with you on social channels? How important is the time they spend with you as it relates to creating

the perception that you are the industry leader?

Utilize Google Analytics tracking codes and social platform analytics to measure every person who engages with your website through your PR efforts. Look at the landing pages you send them, and work you're your marketing team to determine what you can do to increase the time these key customers are engaging.

8. **Don't analyze by yourself:** The worst thing a marketer can do is to manage analytics in a vacuum. True results will come when marketing can ladder their goals and results into large company-wide programs such as sales, customer management and HR. Create a central analytics program to help surface next steps that can be taken to maximize the ROI generated by PR efforts across your entire company.

Press releases are action documents. They signify the beginning of a new discussion about your company and brand both within media circles, and consumer audiences.

PR professionals who expand their measurement programs to include results other than coverage will create more successful PR programming that ties even more directly to the sales and marketing funnel.

REVEALING THE EFFECT OF NEWS RELEASES ON STOCK ACTIVITY

Although there are a lot of options for measuring communications efforts, there is a gap when it comes to attributing financial ROI to company issued news. The Market Impact Report is a groundbreaking new measurement tool that allows communication professionals to track the impact their news releases have on publically traded companies' stocks.

News Quantified, in partnership with Business Wire, developed a measurement system that will tie news release data with market trading behavior. Now, PR and IR pros will be able to track exactly how the market reacted to the issuer's stock immediately following the release of company news. They will also be able to compare this trading behavior to that of other company stocks.

What's the big deal about keeping track of changes to market behavior following the issuance of a news release? With the [Market Impact Report](#) you can achieve a deeper understanding of how and why your company stock moves when you issue a news release. You have a deeper view of what kind of investors your news is attracting and how your news is influencing their trading. The report includes 27 key variables ranging from volume and variability to ticks and block trading.

By understanding who your news is reaching, you can tailor your communication in the direction that best benefits the value of your company's market presence.

Oliver Schmalholz, co-founder and CEO of News Quantified, has spent the last 15 years analyzing market behavior. It was during his time running a private trading firm that he recognized the benefits of an out-of-the-box product that could analyze news impact on stock trading behavior. "News and market data have historically been kept separate – our alliance with Business Wire will help to tear down that wall," says Schmalholz. "We are thrilled to partner with a company that has the reputation and expertise of Business Wire.

Business Wire is excited about the partnership and looks forward to the possibilities that lie in providing clients with the first ever financial impact tool. "Business Wire's collaboration with News Quantified provides listed companies with a better understanding — and appreciation — of the relationship between news and share price. To see how news is directly influencing market behavior is revolutionary," said Gregg Castano, Business Wire President. "The Market Impact Report consolidates information from disparate sources into a convenient, user-friendly report that distills complex data into key findings. It is another example of Business Wire's differentiating value proposition."

Business Wire Market Impact Report

powered by News Quantified

How Your Company-Issued Releases Affect Stock Trading

Achieve a deeper understanding of how and why your stock moves on release day and beyond with Business Wire's Market Impact Report powered by News Quantified. This innovative report provides a comprehensive overview of event-day analytics in relation to press release dissemination and refreshes automatically for 90 days.



- 1** **VALUE**
What is the fluctuation in stock price from the moment company news is disseminated?
- 2** **VOLUME**
How does a news release influence the trading volume of your stock?
- 3** **VOLATILITY**
What is the variability in the trading of your stock following the issuance of a news release?

YOUR STOCK PERFORMANCE IS:

- 4** Measured against three peer companies of your choosing*
- 5** Compared to stock performance on non-news issue days

*This product is for U.S. publicly-traded companies only

To learn more about the Market Impact Report visit us [online](#) or get in touch with your account executive.

- The Market Impact Report also highlights where your stock traded, aggregates sub-penny, odd-lot and block transactions. Additionally, the report includes time-stamped, event day mainstream media monitoring.
- The Market Impact Report reveals the investor class your company-issued news attracts, and the influence that news has on their trading habits.
- Determine which Electronic Communication Network (ECN) and exchange the transactions took place
- Know the amount of block shares traded (10K+ shares) and when they occurred
- View additional news generated: Top 50 media monitoring sources include AP, Bloomberg, CNBC, Forbes, Fox Business Network, FT.com, MarketWatch, Reuters, Seeking Alpha, The Business Insider, TheStreet.com and The New York Times.

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